

Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

Thy Word is a
lamp unto my
feet, and a light
unto my path.

Ps. 119:105

The testimony
of the Lord is
sure, making
wise the simple.

Ps. 19:7

Our Bethel

"I Have Prayed for Thee"

Hexagon Faith

Christ Is Coming

The Bridegroom Cometh!

A Tribute to our Founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols

Born October 1, 1844 — Died February 28, 1912

*Ah, Leader,
When wilt thou rise?
When will that cry,
"The Bridegroom cometh!" fill the sky?
Shall it in the evening run,
When all our words and works are done?
Or shall it's all-surpassing light
Break at midnight?
Or shall some early fragrant hour
Disclose our God's almighty power?
When will we hear it, when will it come?
When wilt thou hear it, sleeping one?*

*Ah, Leader,
It matters not to thee;
But oh, it matters much to you and me,
For, brothers, when that Day has come,
When wide the heav'ns have opened
And the King, our Lord,
Descends to judge His servants and reward
The work that they have done in their brief day,
What will we say?
My friends, what will we say?
Will we be able then to greet our Lord
Assured that ours will be the full reward?
Will we rejoice to meet Him then
And forward look to time that has no end?—
Or will we have to hang our heads in shame
And think of golden days we spent in vain?*

*The choice is ours, as now
With aching hearts we long
The dawning of that better Day to see.
And yet how final it will be.
Oh, hear our leader pleading still.
Let words of wisdom fill
Your mind, and look beyond.
Think how you'll feel, to stand
With Christ and all His saints in triumph then,
And set to work with earnestness, for lo!
"The Bridegroom cometh!"*

—Contributed

Megiddo means

"a place of troops" (Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon); "a place of God" (Young's Analytical Concordance). Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, strategically located, and the scene of frequent warfare. In the spiritual parallel, it is a place where soldiers engaged in spiritual warfare gather to renew their strength and courage (II Cor. 10:4-5).

We believe

—in God the Creator of all things, all men, and all life.

We believe

—in the Bible as containing the genuine revelation of God and His purposes for men, and as being our only source of divine knowledge today.

We believe

—in Christ the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was born of a Virgin, ministered among men, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.

We believe

—in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.

We believe

—in all mankind as providing the nucleus from which a superior, God-honoring people shall be chosen to receive the blessings of immortal life.

We believe

—in ourselves as capable of fulfilling the demands and disciplines given us in the law of God, thus perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

We believe

—in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth will be filled with His glory, His people, and His will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Bible quotations

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version. Other versions are identified as follows:

NEB—*New English Bible*

NIV—*New International Version*

NAS—*New American Standard*

RSV—*Revised Standard Version*

TLB—*The Living Bible*

TEV—*Today's English Version*

JB—*The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition*

Phillips—*The New Testament in Modern English*

Berkeley—*The Modern Language New Testament*

Weymouth—*The New Testament in Modern Speech*

Moffatt—*The Bible, A New Translation*

Williams—*The New Testament, A Translation in the Language of the People*

Rotherham—*The Emphasized Old Testament*

The use of selected references from various versions of the Bible does not necessarily imply publisher endorsement of the versions in their entirety.

Megiddo Message

Vol. 71, No. 9

October, 1984

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The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is a religious magazine devoted to the cause of Christ, and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. Official organ of the Megiddo Church. L. T. Nichols, *Founder*; Kenneth E. Flowerday, *President and Editor*.

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is available in microfilm from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI, 48106.

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** (USPS 338-120) is published monthly (except July) by the Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619. Second Class postage paid at Rochester, New York. SUBSCRIPTION RATE: One year, eleven issues, \$2.00. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619-1697.

MEGIDDO is a way of believing and living, grounded solidly in the Bible as the reliable Word of our Creator. A total view of life, the world and the universe, it sees all events, men and nations moving together toward one God-ordained climax: the Kingdom of God on earth. This has been the plan of God since the beginning. Christ will return visibly, bodily, as King, and the governments of this world will be joined to form a totally new worldwide government. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants. This is the purpose and goal of all creation.

Our Bethel

Scripture Reading: Genesis 28:1-4, 10-22

IN THE book of Genesis is the account of the life of the patriarch Jacob. At the time Isaac bestowed the blessing of his birthright upon Jacob, though Jacob was then nearly 80 years old, he seems not yet to have made a full commitment to God. But he had been laying a foundation upon which he was shortly to erect a superstructure typical of the patriarchs of God, in return for which he would receive a position of full service and full responsibility—and blessing.

Haven't we seen this in other lives, perhaps even our own, that much—too much—time goes by before we grasp as firmly as we ought the magnitude of the opportunity laid upon us?

We might think that to Jacob, the son of Isaac and the grandson of Abraham, faith should have been an automatic, almost inherited thing. Had he not lived all his days with parents of godly reputation, even Isaac and Rebecca? And didn't he cherish the memory of his grandfather Abraham, the father of the faithful, whom he had known for about 16 years of his life?

But faith is never inherited. Each of us has to dedicate ourselves to the service of God, fully and completely, whether ours be the blessing of God-fearing parents or not. Second generation Christians are not Christians at all. Each generation must make the claim to faith for itself. If our faith consists only of an inherited awareness, if there is no solid inner certainty and commitment, no definite conviction of the realities and personal responsibilities of right and wrong, it is no faith at all. Even Jesus had to "learn" and commit Himself to doing the will of His Father. John the Baptist had to do the same, just as you and I must do. There are no exceptions.

The time arrived when Isaac, by Rebecca's devising in line with the Divine arrangement revealed to her, bestowed the birthright upon Jacob. In the eyes of

Esau, this was an insult and injustice. His reaction: anger.

Isaac's birthright was a blessing partly temporal and immediate, and partly spiritual and long-range. At the moment Esau could see only the temporal advantage he was losing: "the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine." Also the authority: "let people serve thee, . . . be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee." But Esau could not appreciate the deeper value of the blessing, for Esau was not "in" on God's plan. From a child Esau had shown no interest in the divine scheme and had lightly esteemed the birthright. And now? Even though he had no interest in the spiritual benefits of the blessing, losing the birthright was a loss. It was a loss of face and position, as well as of temporal gain he *could* have had. True, it was his own fault—he had voluntarily relinquished it. But this fact only made the pain more acute and aroused in Esau a hateful jealousy that moved him to say in his heart, "I will slay my brother Jacob."

When word of Esau's rage reached Rebecca, she immediately disclosed it to Jacob and advised him to flee to the house of her brother Laban in Haran.

Before Jacob departed, Isaac gave him more wise instruction—and another blessing! These are Isaac's words: "Arise, go to . . . the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham" (Gen. 28:1-4).

What did this promise mean to Jacob? Nearly eighty years old, and childless, could it be true?

But Jacob did not question. He departed immediately toward Haran. Little could he have imagined what the next few years would hold for him—of blessing, trial, testing and spiritual enrichment.

As the first day of his journeying drew to a close, we read that "... he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep." This was Jacob's first day of traveling and, as far as we can know, his first day into a totally new life, his first day away from home. Doubtless he did a lot of serious thinking. And praying. How could he be sure he would ever see home again, and the father and mother he loved? What if Esau should hear of his journey and overtake him? What if...—a thousand fearsome thoughts raced through his mind. As never before he admired the stability and strength of his father and grandfather. Never before had he felt so keenly his own need of their God and their faith. As never before he sensed the frailty and uncertainty of his life and his need to serve God while he still had life and health.

And now, the sun gone down, darkness spread above him and a stone for his pillow, he rested. And meditated. And prayed. And as he prayed that night, Jacob drew especially near to God, and God drew near to Jacob. What was the result? God gave him a marvelous and unforgettable dream. Jacob saw "a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac" (Gen. 28:11-13).

What a sight to behold! A ladder reaching from earth to heaven, the Lord standing above the ladder, and angels of God ascending and descending upon it! No interpretation of the dream is given, but can we imagine that Jacob did not inquire? What significance can we see in it? Does it not illustrate to us in a symbolic way the open communication between saints in heaven and saints on earth? Here, too, is made visible an open connection between the heirs of the promise and their covenant God. Here, too, is illustrated the activity of the ministering angels as they carry up our services, prayers, and sacrifices to the throne of God and bring down blessings and consolations. Yes, this ladder between earth and heaven is still intact for those who are part of God's family. And at the head of the ladder stands the Lord, ready to work in behalf of His chosen. Yes, Jacob's ladder—and ours. What a wondrous spiritual connection!

As far as Jacob personally was concerned, it may be

Faith is never inherited. Each of us has to dedicate himself to the service of God, fully and completely.

that the ladder symbolized a connection of the very place and time of hardship with the throne of grace and glory. How he needed the assurance of this link! How he needed to know as he headed out into a strange and unknown land that God would be with him, and that his ministering angels would be near.

And what of us today? Can we say that we do not need this heavenly communication, we who must live everyday in a society where God is unrecognized and unknown?

Along with the dream came a renewal of the promised blessing: "The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Gen. 28:13-15).

It is hard for us to appreciate the magnitude and meaning of this promise to Jacob, coming at a time when he felt like an outcast, an exile, when he was forced to flee from his own home and family—when he had done no wrong, when he had only received the blessing the Lord had intended for him. Can we appreciate what it meant to Jacob when he was fearing Esau's wrath, to be assured that God was indeed with him, to know of a certainty that his life counted for greatness in the divine scheme of things, and that God would bring all events to a grand and glorious climax? Oh, the new courage and hope this first night on the road gave to Jacob!

Then "Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not." Awed and overwhelmed by the experience, Jacob said, "Surely this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

That night and that place were truly a night and a place never to be forgotten. The effect on Jacob's inner

spiritual life was profound. The experience turned the whole focus and direction of his life *Godward*. It awakened in him a serious desire for God's protection, guidance and provision. It gave him new hope, new courage, new insight. It was a great turning point in his life—from hopelessness to hope, from isolation *from* God to fellowship *with* God. Truly, it was an experience to be remembered.

What could Jacob do to perpetuate the memory of this place? That morning when Jacob arose, he "took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel" (Gen. 28:18). Jacob set up a physical monument by which to remember the occasion.

The dream alone might have been enough to make Bethel a remembrance, but there was something more. So deep and so vivid was Jacob's impression that night that he made a vow unto God. "... And Jacob vowed

a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (Gen. 28:17-21).

The Covenant

Let us look closely at this covenant. In exchange for God's providential care, for bread, for raiment and for an assured peaceful return, Jacob pledged to take the Lord Jehovah for His God; and of whatever he should receive he would give unto the Lord a substantial portion; and Bethel would be the witness and the remembrance of this vow.

A simple covenant, perhaps, but it was nonetheless a vow. And any vow to God is a serious matter.

We so easily incline to esteem too lightly the divine

Let Us Pray . . .

Lord, Thou hast searched us and known us. Thou knowest our downsitting and our uprising, Thou understandest our thoughts afar off and art acquainted with all our ways; for there is not a word in our tongue, but lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether.

We thank Thee for Thy constant care and keeping, and for the many blessings vouchsafed to us not only as individuals but as a people, a church, a nation. We thank Thee for our forefathers and their inflexible faith. Thou hast blessed us beyond measure. Out of the darkness, Thou hast called us to light; out of error to truth; out of confusion and conflict to peace; out of death, to life. For all, our God, we thank Thee. We are especially grateful for Thy faithful and wise servant of these last days, into whose sphere of influence we have come. Through him Thou hast done great and wonderful things for us.

Lord, we pray Thy help as we continue in all earnestness the everyday war with our own lower nature, the everyday task of replacing every evil thought with a good thought, taking up our cross of self-denial daily, conscious of the seriousness of our vow to Thee and our accountability at Judgment Day.

Grant to each of us a steadfast heart, which no

unworthy affection can tempt; an upright heart, which no dishonesty may swerve; an understanding heart, which no self-interest can betray; and a contrite heart, which no temptation can shake.

We recall with deep humility the time that we have wasted in half-dedicated living. May we put behind us forever all vain dissembling and henceforth make our commitment complete, remembering that Thou wilt never reward half-hearted effort with Thy full reward.

We pray Thee to carry us out of ourselves and our earthly existence to larger interests and holier heights. Let Thy saints of old speak to us of courage, faith and fortitude; and may we use our memories to encourage us to ever new heights of spiritual attainment, picturing ourselves citizens of a greater world, then working to make that picture a reality.

We pray Thee to bless Thy people everywhere who are seeking Thee in sincerity and in truth. Strengthen them in their trials, sustain them in sickness, comfort them in loss, uphold them in weakness, and deliver them in suffering.

As we meet today at our Bethel, our place of remembrance, wilt Thou prepare our minds and hearts that we may receive deeper impressions from Thy Word, so deep and so lasting that they will go with us through all the ordinary days to come. And may we find our deepest joy in surrendering those things that appeal to us most when Thy law says No, confident that Thy recompense will be more than abundant; for Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen.

commitment in our lives. A vow is a serious and sacred obligation, and God expects us to remember and honor our vows. This is another reason why Bethel became a remembrancer for Jacob, for Jacob had made a vow which he intended to keep. God expects us to remember and honor our vows. "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it, for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed" (Eccl. 5:4).

God does not compel anyone to vow to serve Him. The decision is 100% voluntary; but the fulfilling of that vow is compulsory. Once we make a vow, we are not free to forget it, even if keeping it proves a matter of greater dimensions than we had anticipated. Whatever the cost, we must see it through. For this reason, "Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay."

When we make a vow, we act upon our highest resolves and holiest ambitions. To break that vow is to act in opposition to all these and repudiate our groundwork of faith—which is impossible to do without suffering.

When we make our vow to God, we solemnly promise to give that which we may not withhold without sinning. And what is the sum total of this? Just one word: Ourselves. To God we owe ourselves and all that we are and have, all our powers and possessions. And the first duty of each one of us is to present ourselves before God in a solemn act of surrender. In this one great crisis of our spiritual history we make the supreme vow with which all others are incomparable—to give up all of self for all of God. Here is the core and center of all God-directed service. Here is the offering without which all other offerings are of little worth. And once we agree to make this offering, God expects us to remember and do it.

When the facts are all in, it may be found that most of our spiritual slips resulted from an unwillingness to submit to the demands of God.

Testing—and Blessing

For twenty years Jacob lived in Padanaram with his uncle Laban. These were years rich with testing—and blessing. For God was with Jacob, and blessed and prospered him.

But twenty years in Haran could not obscure the meaning or remembrance of Bethel, the place of Jacob's vow. Yes, even in Haran, Jacob remembered Bethel. And God remembered Bethel. For when the time came for Jacob to return to his homeland, "the angel of God spake unto [him] in a dream." This is Jacob's own account of the experience: "The angel of

A vow is a serious and sacred obligation, and God expects us to remember. God does not compel anyone to serve Him. The decision is 100% voluntary.

God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I. And he said, . . . I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred" (Gen. 31:11-13). Yes, God, too, remembered Bethel.

When Jacob was finally ready to leave Laban's, with the cattle and the family that were his by the blessing of God, "Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him." Not *an* angel but "*the angels*"! It was another high moment in Jacob's life after a time of testing; another touch with the God of heaven. "And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim" (Gen. 32:1-2).

When Jacob reached Canaan, he received another direct communication from heaven—and still another reminder of Bethel. "And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother" (Gen. 35:1). Jacob was to remember—the persecution and God's mighty and marvelous deliverance. And Bethel.

Jacob relayed God's command "to his household, and to all that were with him," together with the preparations he felt appropriate for such an occasion: "Put away the strange gods that are among you," he told them, "and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went." They obeyed.

"So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him. And he built there an altar, and called the place Elbethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother."

God had fulfilled his part of the promise—He had brought Jacob safely back to Canaan and home. And Jacob did on his part.

God was pleased, for soon after this, God once again

Is there not a Bethel in our lives, a place which signifies to us the presence of God?

renewed His promise to Jacob, changing his name to Israel. We read: "And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel" (Gen. 35:1-15).

Can we not feel the deep reverence, the love, the awe, the sincerity which characterized Jacob's life after that first night at Bethel? Did he not have every reason to look back to Bethel with gratitude? So frequently did he communicate with God after that experience that we wonder if he too could have been called the Friend of God. Or it might have been written of him that he spoke with God "as a man speaketh to his friend," so grateful was Jacob for any word from God.

Our Bethel

And now, what of us and *our* Bethel? Is there not a Bethel in *our* lives too, a point where we pledged ourselves to obey God in exchange for His providential care both now and through all the ages to come? Is there not a place which signifies to us the presence of God among us, where His light first illumined, His hope first brightened, where our darkened minds were first impressed and we were enabled to see beyond the present to the glorious future He has promised? Is there not a place we can call *our* Bethel where His unfailing promise of protection first touched us, and we committed ourselves to His leading?

It is appropriate that we interrupt the routine of our lives to remember *our* Bethel, and to erect our altar to the God who has made our lives so rich, so abundant,

so full of promise. Is it not our sacred responsibility to do all we can to keep alive and fresh in *our* minds the glorious heritage that is *ours*?

We tend to think all great deeds of valor are in *others'* lives; all great history is *behind* us; all heroism, all triumph, all holy conquests are past. But are we not here to do *our* part to make *our* lives great for God? History cannot benefit us except as we make it a *current* event. It is now *our* responsibility to duplicate the holy heroism and triumph of others in *our* lives.

Yes, we, too, need *our* Bethel.

Our Bethel becomes especially meaningful to us at this memorial season as we meet to honor the one who is to us a means of escape from a world of hopelessness. Is it not appropriate right here that we remember all that God has done for us and recall with love and awe the magnitude of His blessings? Can any of us say we deserve even the tenth part of all that has been done in *our* behalf? We who have been so slow of heart to believe, so often stiffnecked and unyielding, who have known the good and done the worse for it—should we not confess with Jacob, "I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all thy truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant"? So abundant has been His mercy toward us!

Let us think, too, about our capacity to remember. Bethel calls us to remember. The faculty of memory is a divine gift to man. Only to man does God say, "Remember." We must "remember," not to be sentimental and worship the past but to see the past with the object of improving the present, to see in it God's acts of lovingkindness toward us and to chart our own progress toward Zion. If we fail to exercise this fine spiritual capability, we shall lose the benefit of one of the richest gifts He has provided.

But we need reminders. We need a Bethel, a memorial. So easily do we forget. We recall the words of the Psalmist who was recounting the experience of his forebears. He quoted the words of Israel's enemies, who said, "The Lord hath done great things for them." But he did not stop there. Immediately he rephrased their words and used them to express his own confident appreciation: "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad" (Ps. 126:1-3). Even the foreigners could see it—then and now. As it is phrased in the Jerusalem Bible, "Even the pagans started talking about the marvels Yahweh had done for us!" Is it not true today also? Those who observe us at a distance marvel at the happiness, the peace, the richness we find in life. May it not be a silent testimony to them that God is indeed with us?

Do we recall the time of our inception into the Chris-

tian life, when first the divine precepts and promises became a vital, activating force in our life and we decided to make an all-out effort to live for God? For many years we may have felt half-satisfied with our half-dedicated life, when suddenly, like Jacob, we realized that our opportunity was slipping by, and made the decision to begin in dead earnest to transform ourselves.

Such a day should mean more, much more to us than the day of our physical birth; and we should ever remember it, constantly asking ourselves the challenging question, Where do I stand today? What have I done with the years? What am I doing *now*? Is my life showing maximum growth and progress for the opportunity that is mine?

Profitable Remembering

The proper type of looking back should help to keep us moving ahead. It is of prime importance that we remember and appreciate our rich spiritual heritage, the events that have combined to set us on the road to life. We want also to recall the profound impressions and lessons that have come to us through the years.

We can all look back on glowing experiences, such times as we want never to forget. We remember the days when we shouldered our cross and did our duty. We can remember our victories for God and righteousness and be encouraged to live ever more victoriously in the days ahead. We can remember, too, the times when we checked the guilty thought, replacing it with a clean, holy thought. We can recall the times when we were easily entreated, when we gave up our own viewpoint instead of holding to it, though we thought surely that we were right.

We can remember with profit the times when we had the moral strength to speak a word for God, or turn the conversation to higher verities when we realized the present conversation was not to His glory.

With justified satisfaction we can remember the times when we had the strength to display a glow of spirituality in a moment of testing, when we kept the right spirit or spoke the encouraging word to a brother or sister who needed encouragement.

We need, too, to remember the lesser events that have helped us, the almost countless "mini-blessings" we so easily overlook, which have filled our days with sunshine, happiness and hope. Too often we remember the unpleasant and carry in our hearts the bitter memories, the unpleasant struggles, the harsh words, while we forget the silent smile, the kind word, the simple courtesy, the helping hand. Too often we remember the seeming slight and forget the brotherly love and

We need reminders. We need a Bethel, a memorial.

innumerable kindnesses we have received. In all of our lives there have been glowing hours that deserve to be treasured, not for their own sake but as an inspiration to greater attainments in the days to come.

So let us, at our Bethel, remember our spiritual heritage.

Admonitions to "Remember"

In the Epistle to the Hebrews are several admonitions to "Remember." It is the message of a text so familiar that we are in danger of overlooking its weighty meaning because of familiarity: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Heb. 2:1). Some of the newer translations sharpen our awareness of the warning. The Jerusalem Bible reads: "We ought, then, to turn our minds more attentively than before to what we have been taught, so that we do not drift away."

In other words, don't forget. Remember.

Another such warning is found only two chapters later: "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Heb. 4:1). What is it saying to us? *We could forget. We could miss. We could come short.*

The sixth chapter of Hebrews urges us to leave the "principles of the doctrine of Christ" and "go on unto perfection," and a large part of "going on" is remembering. How diligent should we be to keep fresh the memory of these things when "God is not unrighteous to forget [our] work and labor of love" (v. 10). Hence the admonition, "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end; that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (vs. 11-12). Following this the author repeats the very promise made to Abraham centuries earlier—still fresh in God's remembrance: "Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee" (v. 14).

Reminders to remember are climaxed in the final chapter of Hebrews. First is an admonition to share the sufferings of the saints. "Remember them that are in
(Continued on page 12)

"I Have Prayed for Thee"

by Percy J. Thatcher, Pastor 1945-1958

WHAT warmer assurance could we hear today than this word from the Master Himself: "I have prayed for thee." To know that someone is soliciting the help of God in our behalf, that someone cares—and more, wants God to care also!

These were the words of our Lord to Simon: "And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren'" (Luke 22:31-32).

I have chosen faith as a theme this evening, being confident that no greater truth can be forced home upon our minds than the necessity of having that strong abiding faith to carry us all through the sifting time that yet lies before us. And it would be well to remember Jesus' words to Peter, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."

Almost without exception, life's defeats and failures may be traced to the loss of faith. Faith exerts a powerful controlling influence on our lives. Faith is the mighty link that keeps us in constant touch with God. Without it the tie is severed. Faith is the keystone of the arch of the old time religion. The greatest of teachers spoke the truth on this wise, "According to your faith be it unto you."

"I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Why did the Master of men address these words to Peter? He knew that Peter needed the sifting, winnowing process to make him full-grown. Peter needed it. We need it, too. Will we stand it in the midst of an indifferent, careless, faithless, godless world? Today skepticism is taking possession of millions of minds; skepticism lurks in our literature; it is enmeshed in every religious system, in politics, in the whole economic and industrial life of the world. Even in our own day men have arisen to speak perverse things and, if possible, undermine the faith of some. There is not one here today who has not felt the subtle tentacles of skepticism and unbelief upon the heart.

You may ask, "When have I been skeptical and doubting? When did my faith ever settle to that level?" It was when the tongue spoke hasty words, when jealousy, pride, foolishness, sensitiveness, or impurity was your master, or when something you said or did was not to the glory of God. While on every side in the siftings of life we see men weakening their trust in that sustaining Providence, may we draw closer and closer that tie of Christian fellowship, of love and unity, joining our prayers to God that our faith fail not.

God is not dead. His word and promises stand unshaken. His laws

are unchanged. Too often our faith is like the stock market—up and down, too often down. The cherishing of an evil thought, a selfish aim, a bitter feeling, something done not to the glory of God, these bring our faith down to a low level. God grant that during the coming year, if it be granted us, we may bring our faith up to par and keep it there. There will never be an abundant entrance till it reaches the hundred mark and stays there. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

How high the faith of the children of Israel soared as that mighty host began their march out of Egypt! But how soon the murmuring began! It was this, that, or the other thing. At the news the unfaithful spies brought back, that they had seen men like giants and in comparison the children of Israel were as grasshoppers, what consternation struck their hearts! They could not sleep. They cried all night like babies. When morning came, Caleb and Joshua tried to quiet their hearts, but all in vain. Their faith was gone.

What was the result of all this? They never got any further than the wilderness. They lived and died there. And we, too, will never see the glories of that Promised Land if we have the disposition and appetite of slaves.

Those who fell in the wilderness

never forgot the fleshpots of Egypt. Their heart was not right.

A man a few years ago lay dying. He had been counted a great teacher. He sent a messenger to the men whom he had taught. "Tell the boys that I've grown surer of God every year of my life, and I have never been so sure as I am right now. I'm so glad to find that I haven't the least shadow of shrinking or of uncertainty." Here was a man dying with a false hope. But can we who have been made acquainted with the true and living God say to each other at this very hour, "Boys, I grow surer of God every day and every year of my life"? Can we say, "I have never been so sure of His goodness and His power as I am right now"? Brother, if we cannot say it, it is time to search at once to find what is holding us back. Search deep, for you must know if your faith is failing, your hope is darkening. Faith means we are confident of what we hope for and convinced of what we do not see.

Some one once said, "Do not look for God where He is not, but look for Him where He is." Too often we have been trying to find Him where He is not, down on the lower level, in the midst of our natural and carnal desires, thinking He will meet us there and in some small way justify our ungodly lust.

What wonderful examples God has set before us of holy men and women who never allowed their most holy faith in Him to fail or be defeated! To them the daily cross and crucifixion was not a tragedy or burden but a spiritual existence that knew no failure or fear.

Oh, the time has come, brethren, when we need a faith like that!

A man wrote the other day saying he doubted very much his ability to make the Kingdom. He had discovered some desire he did not

want to give up. He cried out, "A burden!" There is but one great burden, and that is sin. If your faith and mine does not cause us to rise above it, as an iron yoke it will bear us down to eternal death.

I recall a brother who freely let the tears run down his face as he arose to defend the Truth before the heathen, but not many years afterward his faith was shipwrecked because he could not, *would not*, stand having his faults pointed out. His faith was not skin deep. Our faith must be more than skin deep, it must permeate our entire being and cause us to ride over every obstruction in our way.

Now, right now, in this hour of salvation, the just man "shall live by his faith."

Occasionally our country is stirred over the rescue of some unfortunate victims of a mine disaster, or a ship or airline disaster. One time, two men were entombed in a Nova Scotia gold mine. It was said miners fought to take their turn to effect the rescue. After nine days of ceaseless toil, when the last barrier was broken through and the unfortunate ones were brought to the surface, the strong men broke down and wept; they cheered and hugged each other and all joined in a song and prayer, rejoicing over those brought forth from a dark pit and saved from death.

Oh, I wonder if we are all as anxious to save a soul from spiritual death. How deep is our longing, yours and mine?

It is good to think of these things today and ask, as did the disciples who sat around the table, "Is it I? Is it I?" We are told that without faith it is impossible to please God. If our life is not a pleasure to God, we can rest assured there is no faith there. Those who lack faith attempt nothing.

Brethren, if you are content to

work from a purely selfish standpoint, some day you will hide your face in shame when you stand in the presence of those who had higher aims and a nobler ambition to spend and be spent in the cause of Christ. We need that continual abiding faith in God to strengthen us in every hour of trial. Without faith a man can never fight for a great principle. Faith will not only give you strength when you fight for righteousness, but your faith will bring dismay to your enemies.

Let us rise up today and let our faith grow until it is large; let the large faith inspire us to perform a large service for God and others.

As I look back over my life and count my many failures, I am deeply grateful to God for the time He is still extending. And I am confident that wherever I have clung to faith, my faith has carried me over obstructions and barriers, to serve God and my fellowman.

Brethren, I have prayed that your faith fail not.

Will you pray for me?

MM

I Have Observed . . .

That true diligence seldom fails to reap its reward—success.

That hurting a friend, consciously or not, is much worse than being hurt.

That it takes a big character to profit by the criticisms that come.

That bitter experience is an exacting teacher.

That books may be enemies, rather than friends, unless they, too, are carefully chosen.

—Selected

Our Bethel

(Continued from page 9)

bonds, as bound with them; and them that suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body." Then is a command to remember and esteem those who have shown us the way to life: "Remember your former leaders—it was they who brought you the word of God. Bear in mind how they ended their lives, and imitate their faith" (Heb. 13:7, Weymouth). We ought to live every day in the memory of our brave forefathers in the faith, bearing in mind how they patterned their lives, and imitate their faith. We ought especially to remember the work and character of our spiritual father, our noble founder, Brother Nichols, who redeemed us from the darkness of this world and showed us the way to real life.

The Lord was enjoining us to remember our spiritual ancestors when He moved upon Isaiah to write, "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you" (Isa. 51:1-2).

Above all we should remember our heavenly Father and all His rich goodness to us. We should say with the Psalmist: "I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord; yea, I will remember thy wonders of old." Again, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." And the words of Jeremiah, "This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness" (Lam. 3:21-23).

There is yet something very important we should remember. In fact, no remembering could be more fruitful than remembering our "own evil ways" and our doings which have not been good (Ezek. 36:31)—if that remembering is for the purpose of correcting them. This is the purpose of "setting up waymarks" and making "high heaps" around the places where we have fallen, to remind us of our weakness so that we will not fall there again. The exercise necessary for this kind of "waymarking" is the most healthful that a man or woman determined to grow into holiness can engage in. It is most natural for us to want to forget—or at least minimize—our failures and to set up waymarks identifying the places of our success. Unmindful that our good qualities will take care of themselves, we are very diligent to remember and parade them when our shortcomings are mentioned. But not so with our sins—oh, no!

We May Forget, but God Remembers . . .

But even if we try to forget or cover our sinful tendencies, until we have confessed and forsaken them God remembers. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." We cannot hide from Him.

God remembers. He remembers when we were impatient, sensitive and jealous. He remembers when we were selfish, when we pursued our own interests without considering those of our brother. He remembers the times we failed to say "no" to a temptation to indulge in sinful thoughts or feelings.

He remembers when we put our own interests ahead of His and failed to seek first His Kingdom and righteousness.

He remembers the times we entertained too high an opinion of ourselves, or exalted ourselves at the expense of another, forgetting that "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

He remembers the times we deceived ourselves into thinking we were better than we were.

He remembers the times we forgot—forgot Him and His great purposes, so taken up were we with the things of here and now.

He remembers the times we were not kind and thoughtful of others, when we did not show a Christian spirit to our brother or sister in the faith, when we used our tongue to bite and devour instead of to heal and help.

He remembers the times we stubbornly pursued our own way and our own thoughts, instead of submitting humbly to the wisdom of others.

He remembers. But oh, when we confess and forsake our sins, when we turn and do right, He *forgets!* He forgets so completely that not one of those sins shall ever be mentioned against us but we shall be recipients of His highest honor and blessing—if we just do right.

Oh, as we meet at our Bethel, let us remember. Let us remember the great things God has done for us, the things He has done in us, and the things God has promised to do for us if we fulfill our vow to Him, that someday it may be our delight to meet at a greater Bethel and worship Him anew in the glory of an immortal life, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the faithful of the ages, all fashioned like unto His glorious body, world without end." MM

"Happy is he . . . whose hope is in the Lord."—Ps. 146:5

Hexagon FAITH



THERE are six essential elements in Christian faith. There is something to *know*, something to *feel*, something to *choose*, something to *do*, something to *belong to*, and something to *live for*. Knowledge, feeling, morals, action, belonging and living are all involved.

First in Christian faith is something to know. "All things that pertain unto life and godliness" come "through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" was the candid judgment of the apostle Peter (II Pet. 1:3). Before we can serve God or please God we must know what He has revealed—His law, His mandates, His truth, His plan. We must know Him as the foundation of all history and the eternal guardian of His people. Jesus Himself emphasized the value of knowledge: "And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45).

Then there is something to feel. A religion that is insensitive to feeling is not of God. Feeling is the heart responding to the call of God, the will submitting to the will of God. It is emotional response which cannot come from the intellect alone. Jesus, "when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him

that was able to save him from death, . . . was heard in that he feared" (Heb. 5:7). Can we think for a moment that such a prayer or cry was without feeling? We know it was not. Mere emotionalism is of no value or consequence. Christlike emotion must come out of true Christian faith and be nourished and directed by it.

Third, in true faith there is constantly something to choose. We choose friends, occupations, activities. We choose thoughts, words, attitudes, passions. Sometimes we must choose between lesser and greater, sometimes between better and best. But always we must choose. The decisions may seem infinitesimal, but no dimension of life is too small to be untouched by true faith.

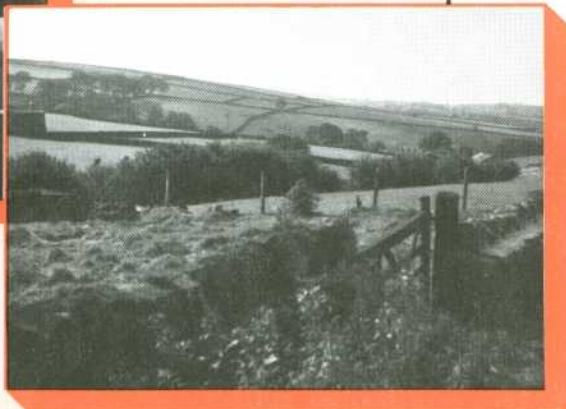
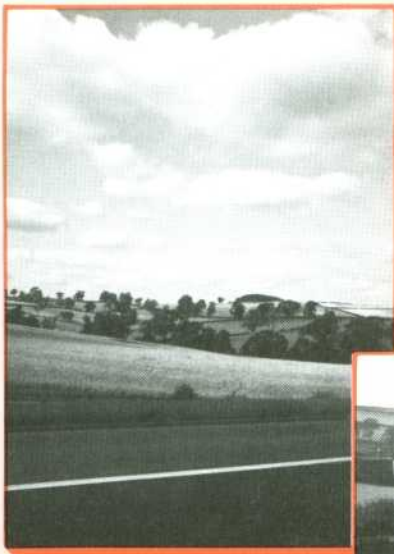
Closely related to this fourth dimension of faith is something to do. Once the choice is made, we must execute it. It will do us no good to choose God-exalting thoughts if we do nothing about pursuing them. And what benefit in agreeing to love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, and all our strength, if we do nothing to *demonstrate* that love? What value in choosing spiritually healthful activities if we do not engage in them? The Christian is called to withdraw from the world, to be

separate, but at the same time he is called to dwell *with* the new community. We are to take the initiative and *accomplish* something, motivated by the favor of God.

Fifth, in true faith there is something to belong to. Christian living is not a solo performance. It is a performance in fellowship with others. We are called to belong to the community of God's saints, the family of God. Such belonging gives purpose to life. It is not effortless, aimless drifting but a journey with a destination; it is a work with a reward.

Last of all, faith is something to live for. Our outlook goes beyond this world to the Day when our King shall return and establish on this earth an eternal kingdom of righteousness and peace, when every knee shall bend to Him and every tongue extol His praises. It is something to live for, the greatest "something" in the history of this planet. In fact, the promises of God are so magnificent that we cannot forget them for a moment. They are real, tangible, and—best of all—they are sure, if we do on our part.

Have we tested all the dimensions of our faith? Have we tried it through and through—and discovered its innermost depths of meaning? If not, why not? How can
(Continued on page 18)



Lines to Live By

*O LEAD me, Lord, that I may lead
The wandering and the wavering feet;
O feed me, Lord, that I may feed
Thy hungering ones with manna sweet!*

*O strengthen me, that while I stand,
Firm on the Rock, and strong in Thee,
I may stretch out a loving hand
To wrestlers with the troubled sea!*

*O teach me, Lord, that I may teach
The precious things Thou dost impart;
And wing my words that they may reach
The hidden depths of many a heart!*

*O give Thine own sweet rest to me,
That I may speak with soothing power
A word in season, as from Thee,
To weary ones in needful hour!*

*O fill me with Thy fulness, Lord,
Until my very heart o'erflow
In kindling thought and glowing word,
Thy love to tell, Thy praise to show!*

*O use me, Lord, use even me,
Just as Thou wilt, and when, and where;
Until Thy blessed face I see,
Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glory share!*

—Selected.

O GOD, the Rock of Ages,
Who evermore hast been,
What time the tempest rages,
Our dwelling place serene;
Before Thy first creations,
O Lord, the same as now,
To endless generations,
The Everlasting Thou!

Our years are like the shadows
On sunny hills that lie,
Or grasses in the meadows
That blossom but to die;
A sleep, a dream, a story,
By strangers quickly told,
An unremaining glory
Of things that soon are old.

O Thou, who canst not slumber,
Whose light grows never pale,
Teach us aright to number
Our years before they fail.
On us Thy mercy lighten,
On us Thy goodness rest,
And let Thy spirit brighten
The hearts Thyselves hast blest.

Lord, crown our faith's endeavour
With beauty and with grace,
Till, clothed in light for ever,
We see Thee face to face:
A joy no language measures;
A fountain brimming o'er;
An endless flow of pleasures;
An ocean without shore.
—Selected.

*MY security comes not from securities, but
from being secure in God, who changes not.*

Do and Be Blest

*DARE to think, though others frown;
Dare in words your thoughts express;
Dare to rise, though oft cast down;
Dare the wronged and scorned to bless.*

*Dare from custom to depart;
Dare the priceless pearl possess;
Dare to wear it next your heart;
Dare, when others curse, to bless.*

*Dare forsake what you deem wrong;
Dare to walk in wisdom's way;
Dare to give where gifts belong,
Dare God's precepts to obey.*

*Do what God decrees is right,
Do what He proclaims is best,
Do with all your mind and might;
Do your duty—and be blest.*

NOTHING splendid has ever been achieved
except by those who dared believe that some-
thing inside them was superior to circumstances.

*MEAN things other people do
Can't hurt me much, I find,
Unless I let revengeful thoughts
Destroy my peace of mind.*

Points for the Month:

Week 1: O God, be with us yet—lest we forget.

Week 2: Prayer is a virtue that prevaleth against all temptations.

Week 3: Help us to forget the things we should not remember, and remember
the things we should not forget.

Week 4: There is just one word to be concerned with now: preparation.

In the Days of the Judges

The Cycle of Unfaithfulness Part III

More Judges

ACCORDING to Bible historians, there was a period of more than sixty-three years between Abimelech and Jephthah. If any rescues were attempted during this time, they are not recorded. The first part of the time was occupied by two judges of whom we know little or nothing: Tola, who judged Israel for twenty-three years; and Jair, who judged for twenty-two years. These must have been uneventful years, at least the Scripture writer saw nothing necessary to record.

But "there is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked," and Israel was wicked. Conditions in Israel had gone from bad to worse. Enough time had elapsed for the people to become thoroughly comfortable among the heathen and indifferent toward God, and finally to turn once again to the practices of those whom they had so long before failed to drive out. Their covenant with God was forgotten: "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord, and served not him" (Judg. 10:6). This represented the greatest involvement with paganism in Israel's history; they had done worse than their fathers.

God was still their King, and had they kept their covenant He would have protected them and would not have allowed the nations around them to oppress them. But in their desperation they sought out the pagan gods of their neighbors, those to the north, the east and the west, and worshiped them instead of the Almighty.

Why? Because they found heathen worship more ex-



citing; the lewd, sensuous rituals and wild dances that accompanied pagan rites attracted their low natures. They were drawn to idols that could be seen and touched, that were near at hand—and that left them free to do as they pleased. Again it was a case of doing what looked right in their own eyes.

All seemed to be well, until suddenly they found themselves oppressed. Everywhere they turned there were enemy soldiers. They were being overrun by the Ammonites.

What was God's attitude toward them? "And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel."

How are we to understand God's anger? Can we imagine God being angry as a man is angry? No, God is never overcome by man's uncontrolled passion of anger. Other translations speak of God's indignation,

or righteous wrath. The Berkeley Bible renders it, "The Lord's indignation was kindled against Israel." So "he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon. And . . . they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel eighteen years . . . so that Israel was sore distressed" (Judg. 10:7-9). God allowed the oppression as punishment for their grievous sin. He was not "mad" at them but only trying once again to teach them a lesson. His law declared, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3)—none, and they had *many*! Small wonder He punished them!

Oppression meant more than having their land invaded. It meant paying tribute to the invading country. It meant enemy soldiers standing on every corner. It meant being slaves to the enemy. It meant doing hard labor without pay and turning over hard-earned crops to feed your persecutors. But they had brought it all on themselves; they had walked into trouble with their eyes wide open. They were only reaping the harvest of following their own desires.

HAD they learned anything from all this? We wonder. We marvel at their stupidity in turning again and again to their evil ways, ways that had brought them and their ancestors nothing but grief. But it had been a long time now, more than a hundred years, since the Midianites had overrun the land, and even longer since Jabin with his iron chariots harassed them. Not one of the generation that had witnessed these events was still living.

The situation was similar to that which followed the death of Joshua, when all who knew Joshua had died and the Israelites turned to pagan gods. Now the children's children forsook the true God. And, as usual,

they cried unto the Lord, saying, "We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim" (Judg. 10:10). Once again in their distress they cried out to God.

But God's answer this time was not what they wanted to hear. Instead of offering immediate help, He reminded them of the many times He had delivered them, only to have them forsake Him again. Did not I deliver you, He said, from the Egyptians, from the Amorites, from Ammon, and from the Philistines? And when the Zidonians, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites oppressed you I delivered you out of their hand. "Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation" (vs. 11-14).

This was not the answer they had anticipated. They had expected a sympathetic ear and immediate deliverance as at other times. He could not abandon them now!

Is there not a deep lesson here for us? If we refuse to hearken to God and consistently go our own way, can we expect God to hear and help in our time of need? We know we cannot. The time will come when He will say, "Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded it . . . I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh" (Prov. 1:26-30). The lesson is for us. God's mercy is *not* forever.

What did Israel say when they received this answer from God? They said, "Are we not Your people? We can't stand this oppression any longer! Please, God, do something!"

How long-suffering could God be with a people so wayward? And

how could they as a people be so foolish? Yes, they knew, and so they said, "We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day" (vs. 15-16). And in their desperation, "they put away the strange gods" and turned to God.

When they had reached the breaking point, they humbled themselves, put away the strange gods, and turned to the Lord. They acknowledged their sin. And God, as rich in mercy and as long-suffering as ever, reconsidered and sought a deliverer for His people. That deliverer was Jephthah.

The Deliverer: Jephthah

JEPHTHAH is introduced rather abruptly as "Jephthah the Gileadite . . . a mighty man of valour," the son of a man named Gilead, (who was a son of one of the daughters of Zelophehad—Numbers 27), a descendant of Manasseh, the son of Joseph. He was called a Gileadite because he was of the country of Gilead, but his family name was also Gilead.

The men of Gilead went personally to find Jephthah and to ask his help against the Ammonites. "And the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob: And they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon" (11:5-6).

Jephthah's answer shows that he had faith in God; he expected deliverance to come from the Lord. "Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh" (vs. 11). He invoked the God of Israel to be witness to their words. Before he would begin his work, "the contract was ratified before the Lord in

Mizpeh," as it is rendered in *The Living Bible*.

We read that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah," signaling divine approval of the job he had been called upon to do. In Old Testament times, God often provided His Spirit to humans for some special purpose, giving them super-human power to accomplish His purpose. For Jephthah, receiving the "spirit of the Lord" was significant in that it provided whatever special instruction he needed to carry out the work for which he had been called, to deliver Israel from the Ammonites.

Jephthah's reverence and great respect for God is singular among the Judges. Before he went to battle, he made this vow to the Lord: "If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering" (Judg. 11:30-31).

The battle was fought victoriously. "The children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel" (Judg. 11:32-33). It was a decisive victory for Israel; Ammon subdued after eighteen years of oppression! They could all rejoice!

But the victory was not really Jephthah's; it was the Lord's. The Lord delivered the enemy into his hands. With the Lord's help, Jephthah and his army not only drove the Ammonites from the field of battle but all the way home. MM

(To Be Continued Next Issue)

My happiness is not dependent on happenings, but upon relationships that persist and develop amid happenings.

At This Urgent Hour

SURELY the time for working out our salvation has never been as urgent as at this hour. This very year with its hours and moments at our disposal can be used to the utmost or negligently squandered if we so choose. But graciously our merciful God is still extending the time, and who can tell—we may yet sing the song of the redeemed! Yes, it all hinges on the haste we make, on the fervor we exhibit toward a holier, more self-effacing, more God-exalting life.

The supreme wisdom of our God saw in us possibilities for a remade man, after His image, after His likeness. To win, aggressive action is a must. For God will never change us automatically without exhaustive effort on our part. It will take proper discipline and much training to bring the mind and the body into complete subjection to His will. Practice and more practice is the all-out requirement.

We have a good example in Brother Paul of a well conditioned spiritual runner who trained his body relentlessly. Oftentimes aching in every muscle and gasping for his very life, yet he never gave up in self-pity. Why? Because he had learned the secret of discipline in his daily life. In any situation he could rejoice and give God the praise. No matter what the affliction or how hard the pressure, he could take it and let it work good for him.

It is God's will that none should perish but that all should have life eternal. But this does not mean He will save all regardless of character. He always judges by fruits. As our teacher and perfect example, He was Himself the embodiment of all that is good, righteous and true before God. Can we be otherwise and live? Can we expect the "Well done" if our fruits are not genuine? Before the Judge of all the earth the answer will be a resounding "No, I never knew you. Depart from me ye workers of iniquity," unless we repent.

In a little while, He that shall come will come and will not tarry. The urgency of the hour should stimulate us into more searching of our hearts to see if there be any wicked way in us. We should seek above all else to know our real self, working steadily and persistently for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. —Contributed

Hexagon (Six-sided) Faith

(Continued from page 13)

we let go the real value of this priceless treasure God has entrusted to our care? How can we absorb ourselves in pettiness—and miss the eternal?

Let us take closer heed to what our faith means to us, for real faith is nothing casual. It is something to know, something to feel, something to choose, something to do, something to belong to, and something to live for. If any of these are lacking, it is incomplete. MM

What Do You Take to Church?



Now that's a strange question, isn't it?

Of course, you take your Bible. And that is good. But there are other things which people take to church with them and we want to talk about these.

Some people take a pick to church with them. They go to church prepared to "pick" anything and everything to pieces. Their attitude is one of cynicism or fault-finding. They "pick" at the preacher. They don't like the way he does some little thing; or they disagree with some detail in his sermon. During the message, they pick it to pieces, finding one trivial fault after another, missing the content and blessing that might be in it for them. Or perhaps they criticize the choir director or the organist or the flower arrangement. They wield the pick so handily that they get no good from the service at all—because they have swung the pick at everything which might have been of benefit to them!



Still others take a shovel to church with them. When the preacher makes some telling point about one of their faults, they piously look over to Sally Shinyface and say to themselves, "I hope she got that jolt." Or, "That statement sure was intended for her." Everything gets shoveled in someone else's direc-

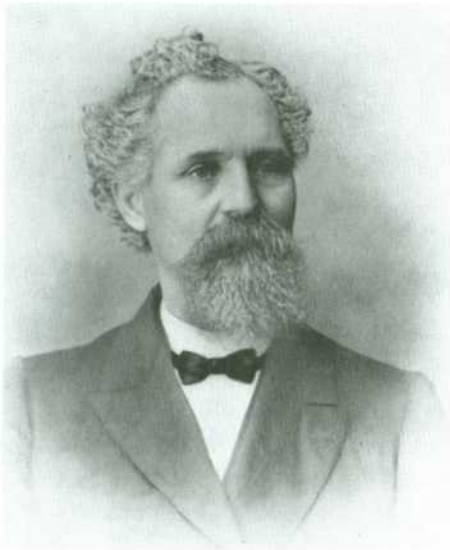
tion. And when another penetrating lesson from the Word has been brought out by God's messenger, these shovelers again throw every good morsel from the Bible over to others, saying, "It's sure too bad that Earnest Helpful wasn't in church this morning. That remark from the pulpit would have straightened him out all right." And so the shoveler takes all the things that might help *him* live the Christian life and piles them in the laps of others whom he feels are more needy than he. Thus he misses the benefit he might have had.

Then there are those who come to church with a rake and a basket. Their attitude is, "What good can I obtain from this service this morning? What is there in the message for me?" When the preacher makes a statement that strikes their hidden sin, exposing it to the light of God's Word, they say, "That should help me; how I need that lesson." They rake up the admonitions and the warnings and the blessings that God has in store for them in the service and pile them into their basket. And when they leave, they have a whole basketful of spiritual truths that they can take home and mull over all during the week. They want to be "doers of the Word, not hearers only."



What do you take to church? Think about it, and resolve to be a member of the rake and basket-bringers!

MM



In Memory of Our Founder 1844-1912

*To our noble founder we are indebted for
the visions that capture our imagination;
for calls to service that enlist our talents and resources;
for strength and enthusiasm that enable us to rise
above our limitations to fellowship with God.*

—K. E. Flowerday

Christ Is Coming

The following discourse by our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, was addressed to the members of the Christian Advent Church in Rochester, New York, January 7, 1905. Its warm appeal is as needful and as timely today as it was nearly eighty years ago.

BELOVED brethren and friends: I take pleasure in standing before you this morning to present to you this wonderful subject of the coming of our Lord. As we realize that He has been away over eighteen hundred years, I deem it a privilege to stand here today and place before you this more than wonderful subject.

I have studied this Book a great deal; it has been my night thought and meditation for a good many years. I have studied to find out what God has told

us. I am a man like yourselves; all I know I have learned through this blessed Book. I have never seen an angel or heard God say a word.

Our Lord, looking down through the vista of future ages, saw fit to tell us to "search the Scriptures" and to "study," that we may be "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (John 5:39; II Tim. 2:15).

THE Apostle Peter declares: (chapter 3:1-4) "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful"—here is something for every mind to contemplate—"of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days"—it was not for those in Jesus' day, but for our instruction, for us in these latter days. "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

We are down in the age when they will scoff at the idea of His coming. They say, "I do not see any signs." I was accosted by a man the other day, no less than a minister, who, when I spoke to him of the coming of the Lord, said, "I do not see any more signs of His coming than there were a thousand years ago." But Peter wanted to stir up our pure minds by way of remembrance, that we might be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets; he wanted you and me to know this first, that there should come these scoffers

who would say, "Where is the promise of his coming?"

CAN WE believe what the angel said about it as recorded in Acts 1:10-11? His beloved disciples were with Him, and as they conversed together He was taken up out of their midst. As they stood gazing heavenward and wondering where their Lord had been taken, suddenly two white forms broke the spell, rending the azure sky, and saying to the disciples, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

It is the only way He could go away—bodily. (There is no such thing as a body without an organization.) And He will return in bodily form as He went away. We find conditional immortality linked together all through the Scriptures.

We are on the verge of the most wonderful event that ever happened to mankind. We are convinced beyond all dispute and doubt that we are living right in the days when we may expect it to transpire; and why are not all the churches of one mind about this? We have 1086 different faiths extant in the world, all claiming to be right. The Divine Testimony tells us that we must become all of one mind, and that mind the mind of Christ. The great trouble is, so many put *their* interpretation on the Scriptures, and consequently it produces different faiths.

THERE is too little reading in the world—reading of the Bible. They are engaged in everything but religion. They are more anxious in regard to temporal affairs than divine things. But we are told in Rev. 1:3, "Blessed is he that readeth"—blessed! the blessing is predicated

to those who read—"and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." The blessing is to those who read and hear and do the things that are written: and if that is true, we had better begin to read.

The Apostle Paul declares in Hebrews 9:28, "And unto them that look for him shall he appear the

***We are on the verge
of the most
wonderful event that
ever happened to
mankind.***

second time without sin unto salvation." We had better begin to look for Him. But we can make up our mind that there will be scoffers. "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Do all things remain as they were? Oh, no! The prophetic statements of Joel 3:9-10 are being fulfilled in our day. It declares: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong."

And Isaiah says, "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift

There is coming a city from heaven,
The beautiful City of God,
Where sin has no power to enter,
Where all shall submit to the Lord;

The City—its equal has never
Been seen in the ages now past;
Whose grandeur and beauty shall ever
Throughout an eternity last.

That city shall one day be planted
Securely on Zion's fair shore;
There Jesus shall reign in His splendor
And Him shall all nations adore.

We look for this city from heaven,
Whose Builder and Maker is God;
And long for its joys to be given
To those who the narrow way trod.

And lo! it will soon be descending—
Not long have His children to wait
Till Christ, with His angels attending
Is seen, as He stands at the gate.



up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him" (Isaiah 40:9-10).

We see this mighty work is to be carried out by the Lord from Heaven, and we need not look for these things to be accomplished until He comes. Then shall be fulfilled the prayer of our Lord, "Thy Kingdom come." That will be fulfilled when He appears. Jesus tells us in Luke 21:25-26 that before His coming there shall be "upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity . . . men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." And then He continues in the 31st verse, "When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." Hence we know it is very near.

WE TAKE a retrospective view of the ages past and gone; we go back to the time of Nimrod, the founder of the Assyrian kingdom, and later the Babylonian kingdom, but all nations were not then preparing for war. Later, when the kingdom of Babylon was forced to give up her dominion and the city was conquered without the loss of a man under the command of Cyrus, and it became the Medo-Persian kingdom, all nations were not preparing for war.

We come down to the time of Alexander the Great, who succeeded to the command of the army at the death of his father, Philip of Macedon, in 336 B. C. He conquered the world in the short space of twelve years, but all nations were not preparing for war; they did not beat their plowshares into swords and their pruninghooks into spears. The prophecy was not for Alexander's time.

WE READ in Acts 3:20-23, "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." He is coming just as sure as I am before you; but, oh! what did he say? "And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet"—in *all things*—"shall be destroyed from among the people."

It declares that in like manner as He went away, so should He come

again, and to those who look for Him shall "he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Every soul who does not hear this Prophet in all things shall be destroyed from among the people. Every soul shall be destroyed. Conditional immortality is connected with every subject in the Bible. I am laboring for you all, that you may receive the blessing when our Master comes, and this depends on our reading and keeping the sayings of this Book.

YOU remember what Daniel says in chapter 9:21-24: "Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon the holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."

The vision was sealed, finished, and ended when John attached Amen to Revelation, and we have never heard from God since; and if we are going to add to His prophecy, He will add to us the plagues that are written therein. And if we take from, He will take our part out of the book of life, as we read in Rev. 22:18-19, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any

man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Men may claim to have visions from God, but they are deceived. We are told in Rom. 15:4, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." If we ever have any hope it will be by learning what the Apostles, Prophets, and Jesus have said. And after we have learned them, we must grow up in them until we reach the full stature in Christ. Yes, we must grow.

WE have to be more than a conqueror (Rom. 8:37) in order to be saved. This means we have to take the fort, and then hold it. The Bible is as full of meaning as an egg is full of meat. Do you suppose we would prove more than a conqueror if we did not have our armor on? Paul tells us we must have on the "breastplate of righteousness" and the "shield of faith," that we may be able to "quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6:15-17).

We can never obtain the shield of faith by reading novels or fiction. Novel-reading is a great evil—if this hits anyone, I cannot help it; I did not come here to please anyone. I came here to declare just what God has said, and we are commanded to "redeem the time, because the days are evil." Reading novels only unfits the memory to retain. I am thankful I never read fiction. But give me a history and let me read it through once, and I will remember it.

I want you to read your Bibles more. You need more meditation, more sweet communion with God. You are not half awake. Take these blessed tidings to every one you meet; tell them the glorious news. I tell you, we have to be energetic workers. We must write these things upon the tables of our hearts, that they may be with us when we lie down, when we rise up, and when we walk by the way. They will be with us all the day long. Our sweet communion with God must last all the day long; these things must be as frontlets between our eyes, we must give ourselves wholly to them.

If I had spent my time reading novels, I would not be able to repeat the Bible from lid to lid. I have studied for all I know. I never went to college, nor to any theological seminary. I never received a diploma, and am glad I did not. Take the great men of this world. Most of them had but small advantages and were self-taught. There are hundreds of men who, after having obtained their diploma, have no use for them after two or three years have elapsed. Study a thing out yourself, and you will always remember it.

We read in II Tim. 3:1-2, "This know also"—something he wanted you and me to know—"that in the last days perilous times shall come." Of what do these perilous times consist? "Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud,"—look at the pride of the world! When I was a boy, all the hats we had we made ourselves. We went out into the field and cut straws and put them in water, and then braided and sewed them together; and that was the best hat we had. If the children now-a-days had to wear those hats, they would not go to Sunday-school at all!

"Pride goeth before destruction,

and a haughty spirit before a fall." We must get rid of all our pride. These two gentlemen sitting before me, when they were boys and when I was a boy, what would we have thought of playing baseball on Sunday? We would not have dreamed of such a thing! But now, as the paper stated the other day, they introduced such games into the church and said their congregation increased wonderfully. Look at the theaters, they are always crowded. The people pay their money to see an old clown kick up his heels or do some other foolishness; but when it comes to hearing the glad tidings of great joy, they are as dry as a contribution box. I might say right here that I have never taken one cent for my preaching. Rather, I have spent thousands of dollars in proclaiming this blessed truth, and will continue to spend and be spent for it.

LET US all begin to sound these glad tidings; and these are the only glad tidings there are. I would ask you in all candor to go home and study these things for yourself, see if we have not given you the chapter and verse for everything we have said.

I want to stand by what God has said, and that alone. If He did not know enough to tell me what He meant, pray tell, who does? Amen.

A Prayer

*In this hour of worship
Grant Thy presence, Lord!
Here, the world forgotten,
Feed us on Thy Word.*

*From our sins and sorrows
Here we seek release;
Of Thy love persuaded,
Find the path of peace.*

—Sel.

• Concerning Original Sin

"In your September 1983 edition of the Megiddo Message, in the article on Work, the writer said, 'In this allegory Adam is being used in a representative role. He represents all who are called to serve God in every age. He transgressed, but his transgression brought condemnation upon no one except himself and those who, like him, transgress.'

"How do you explain Romans 5, verses 18 and 19?"

The text in question reads: "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:18-19). Or as rendered in one of the newer versions, "It follows, then, that as the issue of one misdeed was condemnation for all men, so the issue of one just act is acquittal and life for all men. For as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous."

This text is usually taken to mean that through Adam's transgression, death came upon all his descendants and that Christ's death upon the cross atoned for that sin, freeing us from any responsibility for the sins we are said to have inherited from Adam.

We do not believe this was Paul's meaning for the following reason: The entire basis of God's plan is to recompense individual initiative and responsibility. This is how He determines who receives reward and who is punished. How, then, could God condemn the entire human race for the sins of one man and be a God of justice who judges every man "according as his works shall be"? And conversely, how could God accept the righteousness of Christ as an atonement for the sins of all mankind if He is a God of justice who punishes only the workers of iniquity?

Ezekiel 18 leaves no doubt as to God's manner of dealing. The chapter opens with this statement: "The word of the Lord came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb . . . The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel." And verse 20, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." This is the word of the Lord and no man has the power or the right to change it.

There is another consideration in Romans 5:19 that we should not overlook. Paul states that "one misdeed was condemnation for all men" and "one just act is acquittal and life for all men." Theology concludes from the first statement that because of Adam's transgression death came upon all men. It follows, then, according to the second statement, that Christ's righteousness should likewise benefit *all men*. However, not even the most dedicated believer in original sin and the atonement would agree with this statement in its literal sense. But if the commonly accepted interpretation of this passage is true, then that is what Paul meant. If death comes to all because of Adam, then life comes to all because of Christ. This, we know, is unreasonable.

What, then, did Paul mean? The New English Bible translation yields a clue to the correct meaning. "Through the disobedience of *the one man*"—this one man is a composite man, including all who enter God's vineyard and agree to serve Him, from Adam to the present day. Those who are disobedient will receive as a result of their disobedience the "wages of sin," which Paul clearly tells us is "death" (Rom. 6:23). Natural death does not result from transgressing God's law. Natural death was a fact long before Adam. This "one man," all who agree to serve God and prove unfaithful, will bring penal death upon themselves at Judgment—themselves, and no one else.

The same principle applies to the "obedience of the one man." Again the "one man" is a composite man representing the faithful covenant-makers who are obedient to the laws of God. These all become righteous and are recompensed with the reward of eternal life at Judgment. They meet the standards set for God's faithful children.

• The Law of Moses—and Christ

"Do you think that Jesus Christ earned life for Himself under the law of Moses?"

No, we cannot say that Christ—or anyone else, for that matter—earned eternal life. The reward being so far out of proportion to any service within human capability to render, it can never be truly "earned."

However, the main point of confusion in your question results from the often overlooked difference between the law of Moses and the law of faith (sometimes called the "royal law"). During the entire time that God's plan has been operative on this earth, all who have agreed to serve God have been subject to God's law of faith and obedience. All have been required to render obedience to the law of God, whatever that law might require. To Adam that law included this command: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16-17). To Noah that law included the constructing of an ark (Gen. 6:14). To Abraham that law included the command to offer up his only son Isaac upon an altar (Gen. 22:2). The apostle Paul called it the "law of faith" (Rom. 3:27) and James the "royal law" (Jas. 2:8). To all in every age it has been a law requiring obedience, self-sacrifice, and self-surrender. In Revelation the blessing is promised to all who "do his commandments, . . . that they may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14). This law, if fully kept, will bring eternal life.

The law of Moses is in an entirely different category. The apostle Paul says specifically of it that it was "added" to an already existing law (the law of faith and obedience) (see Gal. 3:19). It was "added" for the benefit and training of a specific group of people (the Israelite nation) for a specific period of time (the duration of that nation).

The slaves leaving the land of Egypt were a new nation and accustomed only to the law of brute force. As a people they needed to be taught the

basics of good general living, good government, and good civil conduct. The law of Moses was given for this purpose, to make of the Israelite people a strong civil nation. As an incentive to compliance, God conditioned many temporal blessings upon the nation's obedience to this law. If they were disobedient, they were promised curses. But in no case were they promised eternal life for obedience to the law of Moses because that law could not take away sin or "make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. 10:1; 9:9). For this reason, when its purpose was accomplished, it was removed. "There is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law (of Moses) made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God" (Heb. 7:18-19). "Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (Heb. 8:13). "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" (Heb. 10:9).

Many times in his writings Paul used the terms "law" and "works" when he was referring to the law of Moses and to the many outward acts of obedience ("works") that it required. Added to this were many more "works" designed not by God but by an apostate Jewish Priesthood which sought to embellish and "interpret" the law of Moses and in so doing added literally hundreds of petty laws. These "dead works," as they were termed (Heb. 9:14), these "works" he referred to as null and void must never be confused with the "good works" required by the law of faith of all who would be heirs of salvation (see Eph. 2:10; Tit. 3:8; Col. 3:8-10; Gal. 6:15). The importance of these "works" of righteousness, these "works" that do count for salvation, cannot be overstressed. They are as serious as life and death. As James wrote, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26).

MM

Evaluating . . .

Science can give us no formula for the evaluation of human beings, because the quality of man cannot be measured by mathematics or isolated in a test tube. Lacking a formula, we must rely on three factors: ability, personality and character.

Ability has no substitute, for it is a recognition of performance, a laurel bestowed by actual demonstration and achievement, not by ancestry or fortune. *Personality* is the light by which ability makes its way. The greatest, however, is *character*. Personality has the power to open many doors, but only character can keep them open.

Patience, Patience

This morning I was thinking of the virtue of patience, how we need to cultivate it in our daily lives. In this world of rush and turmoil, there is virtue in the person who can remain calm. The lines at the supermarket sometimes stretch forever, it seems, just when you are in a hurry to get home. The traffic is so congested at 5 P. M. in the evenings it is hard to cross the street at a busy intersection. The rain continues for days on end until it seems one can never get the laundry out to dry. These little inconveniences to the Christian can be used to cultivate the virtue of patience, which we surely need in our spiritual gardens.

Patient waiting during a busy day disciplines us, and we need discipline as much as we need patience. Each of us has a test of our patience each day. We must keep in mind the verse in James 1:4, "But let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire wanting nothing." We must remember to not grow impatient as we overcome each blemish in our character.

If we fall, it's no excuse to stay down. But with each slip backward, we must be more cautious and our efforts more sincere for "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord" (James 5:7).

**God give you His peace every day
A cheerfulness nothing can dim
The power to walk in His way
In perfect obedience to Him.**

**The strength to His promise to cling
And never give place to a doubt;
God give you a heart that can sing
Whatever the weather without.**

Ohio

M. W.

Great Peace

Jesus wanted His disciples to know the great peace He had experienced. Soon He was to be taken from them, and although He knew they would experience a great trial when He was no longer with them, He assured them: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."

How wonderful to have this great peace within our hearts, and to come through the trials and stress calmly and patiently—and above all things to see the will of God shining out through all in faithful loving obedience.

It is a peace we shall have to keep working for, it is not automatic. It is something we must experience as we are in unity with God. Do we have this great peace?

Really we are all very near to one another, led and guided by the same spiritual truths, and it is good to share thoughts which help us win the victories of the Kingdom of God.

Our love for Him who made precept and example a complete unity by His own perfect obedience demands this of us, for He has told us: "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15).

So may we redeem the days remaining to us, for we do not know the hour our Lord will come.

Australia

A. B.

Creating

God surely knew what He was doing when He created nature. Human nature now, that is another matter. God wants us to do the creating there!

Michigan

D. J.

Come Down, to Go Up

It takes courage to serve God alone. We have to walk the strait and narrow road to reach life forevermore.

Human nature does not like to humble itself and follow, for mankind in general is proud, puffed up with self-importance. And until we realize, as did the Prophet Jeremiah, that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps, we shall not progress up the Hill of Perfection.

We must come down to go up.

Georgia

S. J.

Obituary

Clifton H. Fleming, Sr.

We have just received word of the death of Clifton H. Fleming, Sr., of Peoria, Arizona on August 14, 1984. The Fleming family's acquaintance with the Megiddo Church was a direct result of the church's yacht missionary effort on Lake Champlain in 1923, when Clifton purchased a set of books from one of the bicycling missionaries who was working in the vicinity of the Fleming home in Vermont.

Brother Fleming is survived by his wife Dorothy of Peoria, Arizona, who throughout their life together did everything in her power to make life pleasant and comfortable for her husband. He is also survived by two brothers, Reginald and Floyd, both of our Rochester Congregation, five sons, Clifton Fleming of New Braunfels, Texas; and Theron, Forrest, Thane and Leith, all of Arizona; one daughter, Mrs. Wynona Kapica of Rochester, New York; and numerous grandchildren.

And Still She Speaks

Extracts from sermons, discussions, talks, comments
by Rev. Maud Hembree (1853-1935).



We do not want some little thing to bar the door of the kingdom of God to us. We do not want to be among those foolish virgins. We do not want to be like the man that thought he was a good driver—because he could drive the carriage so close to the edge of the precipice without accident. We want to watch.

We would never form characters worthy of eternal life if we were not placed in a position where we had some trials to test our character and cause us to show by our words and actions that eternal things are dearer to us than temporal things. It takes discipline to form a character that will please God.

What a wonderful promise, to be the people of God! What a wonderful and high honor to be called out of darkness into the marvellous light of God's glorious truth—if we will only walk in it, and grow! Oh, we have to keep growing in much patience, putting away all anger, and wrath, and evil, putting away all pride and worldliness, if we want to become part of that temple which is to abide forever.

God has a family in heaven, and also a family on the earth; and He is going to take in other worlds, and worlds, and worlds. Through endless ages He will continue to take out men and women to form characters worthy of living through a gladsome eternity. Oh, this wonderful knowledge of God!

If you want to become sons and daughters of the living God, you must grow in holiness, put away evil. He will give you time; He will give you time in which to do the work; but you must keep growing—not stand still, not go backward, but keep growing in the divine life. Then, He says I “will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” The Great and Mighty God, the Great Creator of the wonderful universe, says, If you do as I command, I will be your Father, and “ye shall be my sons and daughters.” What a promise!

We do not have to engage in foolishness to pass the time away. Oh, time is so precious! We did not realize it when we were young; it has taken many years for us to realize how precious time is.

Some people can control the tongue a part of the time for policy sake, when they may be raging inside, but they will never gain eternal life in that way. To gain eternal life the inmost recesses of our heart must be controlled.

If we do not control our tongue we will not get that reward which is eternal in its duration.

If somebody does you an injury it does not do any good to get impatient about it. We must control ourselves, and thus demonstrate that we are wise in the knowledge of God. His wise men and women are those that have learned to control self, who have brought one individual into subjection. They are the ones He is going to save.

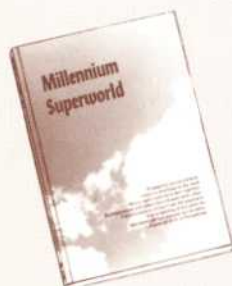
Put away all pride. Learn that “Pride goeth before destruction.” If those who take pride in their natural ancestry would go back far enough, they would find much to be ashamed of.

Education, dress and almost anything else can exalt people in the eyes of the world; nothing but character exalts men and women in God's sight.

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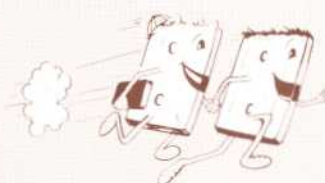
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